584 They bargain over the amount of the kalym. The yauchi presents a gift kargibau, and receives as a gift a horse or a coat, which is called chege chapan (nail-coat), because he has validated the betrothal. The father of the bride sets the day, through this yauchi, for the coming of the groom's father with the formal proposal, for regalement and for delivering gifts to him (kiit kiib, sois yeb, kuda tusib ketsin). According to Makovetskii, "the formal proposal is frequently separated from /59/ the first agreement by many years, for example, if the groom and bride are in the cradle at the time of the agreement." Then the father or a kinsman of the groom becomes the matchmaker (kuda) who appears in the house of the bride, usually accompanied by relatives, for the formal proposal, the agreement about the kalym and the acceptance of the gifts kiit. According to Makovetskii, the more important the people making the match, the larger the number of matchmakers, sometimes more than twenty. As they approach the village of the bride's father, the matchmakers stop with his kinsmen and send an announcement of their coming from there. The bride's father notifies his relatives and friends of the presence of the matchmakers and orders the setting out of tents for the guests. When they appear, the matchmakers make the proposal in the presence of guests, which is accepted and validated by the slaughter of a white sheep and the reading of a blessing /baty/. The most valuable of the gifts is given to the father of the groom. This is required even when the groom's father is not among the matchmakers. In this case the gift is sent to him at home. According to the report of bii Khamahammed, the color of the sheep is indifferent; it can also be a kid and poor people can buy meat at the bazaar. He also says that the best gift is presented to the groom's father or to the person who is taking his place.

For the consecration of the contract which has been concluded, those present are regaled with fat-tail sheep fat (kuyruk) and liver (baur) which is cut into long strips. The platter with the kuyrukbaur is offered first to the groom's relatives and then to the bride's relatives. After this ritual the groom already speaks of his bride as "my lawful wife" (nikakhli khatynym). The feast, called kuda tusertoy, sometimes continues for several days. They arrange a baiga /horse race/, a fight, and the singing of choruses and soloists (zhirchi), who sing folk epics or compete in improvisations, playing on the balalaika (dombra), violin (kobyz) and flute (sybyzga).

[534]

All during the merry-making the matchmakers play the most mournful role. The young women and girls make fun of them in all

possible ways. They strip them naked and drag them through the village with a rope around the neck, as the laughing-stock of the people. /60/ They are sewn into felt during the eating. They do such unpleasant things with them, that it is impossible to tell of them here. They drag them by the legs through the changarak /the hoop at the top of the tent/, etc. There have been cases where the women have caused the death of matchmakers from playing with them. In such a case their husbands and kinsmen are held responsible for the wergeld nevertheless.

After this the father or a kinsman of the bride, but with a smaller number of people than the matchmakers on the groom's side, visit the father of the groom and receive kiit gifts from him. According to bii Sultan, the kiit, which is determined by stipulation (kesimdi) is for the use of the bride's father. What the other matchmakers receive depends on the free will of the groom's father, without being fixed (kesimsiz). Regalement with kuyrukbaur is not obligatory. If the entire kalym is not paid on this visit, then the first installment is, in the presence of the guests. Further installments can be presented without witnesses. If the bride's father denies having received them, an oath is required of him alone. Relatives and acquaintances (tamyr, yekchet) contribute to the kalym (kalynga kosady) often of their free will. There is no custom for the matchmakers to give more than the value of the gift received by them from the bride's father (this contradicts Makovetskii, Pt. I, p. 16).

Among the Kirgiz a rich father of the groom slaughters 4-5 sheep, a poor one 2 or 3. They are cooked at night. On the following day this meat, which is called "toy" is packed on a good animal, on whose head they tie a piece of cotton, called aktyk, for a sign (irym), and it is led to the bride's father. The animal is presented to him with the words: "for the transport of your treasure, " if it is a camel, or "for you to eat", if it is a horse. He is also given a sarypay. (1) The

1. Coat.

groom remains home. At the matchmaking they arrange baiga or kukbure /game played on horseback with kid. Cf. chapter XII/, the playing on the balalaika (2) and the zurna /type of oboe/.

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2. The Kirgiz balalaika has 3 strings, while the Kazakh one has only 2.

[311 cont.]

equally from heat and cold.

The violence of the wind brings enormous flakes of snow into the tent through the door and the opening at the top, and sometimes a storm blows over the felt edifice with all its occupants. The children, half-naked, come out from under the felts or the sheepskins in which they are usually enveloped, throw themselves on the hot cinders, burn their hands and feet, and utter cries which pierce the heart.

In order to protect themselves from the misfortunes and unpleasantness which winter causes them, the Kazaks choose for their winter camp the middle of some grove, reeds, hills, or the sands in the southern part of the steppes.

We have said earlier that their camps, winter as well as summer, cannot be exactly determined and are not always occupied by the same inhabitants. Nevertheless, they are quite constant in the choice of the former, because not all localities present the [312] necessary conditions for a winter camp to the same degree and because the depth of the snow does not allow them to move.

Some Kazaks, especially those who are nearest to the Russian border, collect supplies of fodder in the autumn, dig pits in the ground to put their livestock in, and build fences of wattling, when the place permits it, to protect themselves from the wind, especially the north wind.

The suffering they are caused by the frosts and storms makes them celebrate the return of spring with rapture. They spend most of the summer days sleeping and drinking kumiss, and they eat very little meat. At night they gather to enjoy the pleasures of the table together, and to tell each other stories, or to listen to musicians who play the chibyzga or the balalaika.

But the autumn is the best time of the year for them. It is in this season that they undertake their longest trips (1), and they

1. We will note in passing that superstition prevents the Kazaks from undertaking long trips when the moon is on the wane.

/205 cont./

533 the opposite impression. In general, it is predominantly drawn-
[594] out and mournful. The Kirghiz /Kazak/ value the ability to sing and the "olengchi" (singers) live well, being invited as honored guests to every family and community festival and given
• 534 generous gifts for the pleasure they provide. Usually the performance of a song is accompanied by the playing of an instrument. Instruments that are widespread are the domra -- a kind of triangular balalaika with three strings (of sheep gut) -- and the

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At the fair in Temir. (From a photograph by A. N. Chagin.)

534 kobza /illustration appears here/ -- an oval balalaika with a prop at the bottom (like a violoncello), which is played with a bow. Of the wind instruments one can mention the zurna, which is a long wooden horn.

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286 Pictorial art also exists among the Kirghiz /Kazak/, being expressed in the coloring of figures and designs on the doors of yurts, vessels, saddles, etc., as well as in the weaving of various patterned woolen articles. This art is still on a low level of development.

128 We shall turn now to a more detailed description, first of the interior and then of the exterior everyday life of the Kirghiz /Kazak/.